QUARTERLY SUMMARY

OF THE

IMPROVEMENTS AND DISCOVERIES

IN THE

MEDICAL SCIENCES.

ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY.

Case of Total Absence of the Spleen.

The following curious fact is related by KOCH and WACHSMUTH in the *Berliner Klinische Wochenschrift*, February 10, 1879. On the 6th of December, 1878, in the hospital of Altona, there died a large, strongly-built, muscular plumber, who had been received two days before with his son, a lad aged 15, who was ill with typhoid fever. The father was feeling very unwell; his temperature was very high. He had profuse diarrhœa, together with a few rose-coloured spots, suggesting the probability of the same affection from which his son was suffering, especially as he had been nursing him. The spleen, however, could neither be palpated nor percussed, and the examination of the patient revealed only bronchopneumonia of the right side of the chest. At the necropsy, this latter diagnosis having been confirmed, the authors proceeded to examine the spleen, which, to their great astonishment, they could not find anywhere. All the intestines were perfectly normal, as to their size and situation, but there was neither a spleen nor a vessel corresponding to the arteria splenica.—*London Med. Record*, May 15, 1879.

Case of Obliteration of Vena Cava Inferior, with great Stenosis of Orifices of Hepatic Veins.

Dr. WILLIAM OSLER, Prof. of Institutes of Medicine in M'Gill University, Montreal, reports (*Journal of Anat. and Phys.*, April, 1879) a case of obliteration of the inferior vena cava, in which the obliteration can neither be traced to compression nor to the extension of a thrombus, and which had probably lasted some years, the vein being converted into a firm fibrous cord; and the hepatic veins, where they enter the cava, are so far involved as to be reduced to the condition of insignificant orifices. The collateral circulation was carried on chiefly by the azygos vein, which also provided accommodation for a considerable proportion of the blood of the portal system.

The absence from the clinical history of the case of any acute illness which may be supposed to correspond to the date of occlusion, and the general backwardness of nutrition which was observed, favours the view of the obliteration being congenital, but there is nothing else to support it. Whatever may have been the primary cause of the obliteration, it must have led to the formation of a thrombus, the final transformation of which is represented by the cord-like structure mentioned above.

The clinical history of the case and the notes of the post-mortem examination are minutely given.

Physiological Albuminuria.

Dr. MARCACCI, in a communication to the Medical Society of Florence on May 12, 1878, and reported lately in *L'Imparziale*, observes that the presence of albumen in the urine is considered by the majority of physicians as the index of a pathological condition, although Bernard, Vogel, Hoffman, and others, have pointed out that albuminuria may be met with in men whose health is perfect, and under certain conditions of alimentation. The excessive consumption of eggs is only one of the conditions of this sort of physiological albuminuria. It is somewhat difficult to prove that the presence of albumen is not related either to a morbid state or to a special *régime*. Moreover, there exists a certain number of cases of error. In these researches, it is only with small quantities of albumen that one deals, while the blood, pus, and the urethral mucus, or that of the other neighbouring organs or prostatic fluid, may in themselves constitute a cause of error when they are mixed with the urine. Nevertheless, according to M. Marcacci, a series of observations made upon himself has proved to him that albumen may be found in a physiological urine. Albumen, he says, is constantly absent in nocturnal urine; on the contrary, it is very rarely absent in diurnal urine; it is possible to make albumen appear in the diurnal urine by executing rotatory movements of the arm for from ten to fifteen minutes in such fashion as the pulse is raised from seventy-five to one hundred and fifteen pulsations a minute. These results are in some sort confirmatory of the researches made by Leube at Erlangen in 1877, which are worth while summarizing. Leube undertook his research on the soldiers of the garrison at Erlangen, and took the necessary precautions to avoid blenorrhagia. The following was his method of research. Fresh urine was filtered, and a certain quantity carried to the boiling point; the other was treated by nitric acid, both being compared with the intact urine on a block tablet. In the urine which showed opacity, a small quantity of acetic acid was added to precipitate the deposit. This precipitate was washed and treated by Millon's fluid, and another test was made with the liquor potassæ, and possibly with the sulphate of copper and heat, when the purple red or violet colour was obtained with Millon's fluid, or the violet colour with the potassa, the urine was considered as albuminous. Leube examined the night urine of 119 soldiers. The number of observations was 154, which were thus divided: 90 soldiers were examined once, 23 were examined twice on two different days, and 6 were examined three times at intervals of three days. Briefly, out of 154 examples of nocturnal urine, only a very small quantity of albumen was found in five cases, and in only one case a notable proportion. Researches performed on the urine secreted during the day after military exercise, and in the months of June, July, and August, gave very different results; in fact, of five soldiers who had shown albumen in the night urine, a much larger quantity was found in the day, and further, albumen was found in eighteen soldiers who had not presented any in the night. Bringing the frequency of albumen in these observations to a percentage, it was found that the morning urine was albuminous in 5 soldiers out of 119, that is to say, in 4.2 per cent.; that of the middle of the day was albuminous in 19 soldiers out of the 119, that is to say, in 16 per cent. The day urine was only albuminous in 14 soldiers out of 119, that is to say, 11.8 per cent. Finally, the urine of the morning and that of the middle of the day were equally